

## **NUNEATON AND BEDWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

### **SIMPLIFICATION PATHFINDER BOARD**

**13 June 2025**

A meeting of the Simplification Pathfinder Board was held on Friday 13 June 2025. The meeting was held at MIRA Tech Park, Watling Street, Nuneaton, CV10 OTU.

**Present:** Sean Farnell (CWLEP) - Chair, Alison Thompson (WCAVA), Lindsey Randle (Horiba-Mira), Steve Hey (Councillor), Les Ratcliffe (CWC), Garry Palmer (WCC), Keith Kondakor, Dr Elinor Parsons

**Officers in attendance:** Maria Bailey (NBBC), Mark Farmer (NBBC), Salewa A-Ogunleye (NBBC) - Mins

**Apologies:** Marion Plant (NWSLC), Jenni Northcote (NHS), Jet Jones (Together for Change), Nicky King (Councillor), Jodie Gosling (MP)

SPB21 Chair's welcome and announcements

The Chair welcomed Board members to the meeting and introductions took place.

SPB 22 MIRA Overview

An Overview of MIRA was presented to attendees, providing the background information on its mission, services, and operations.

SPB23 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 April 2025, were confirmed and signed by the Chair.

SPB24 Declarations of Interests

Board members' interests for the meeting were as set out in a Schedule of Declarations of Interests, attached to the agenda.

SPB25 Highlight Report

NBBC submitted a Highlight Report (which had been circulated prior to the meeting) to update Board members on the status of the Simplification Pathfinder programme and individual projects. The report detailed the overall Simplification Pathfinder programme financial status, the key risks and upcoming activities.

- Grayson Place – Phase 1 – hotel is operational and has helped generate national and sub-regional interest.

Phase 2 is due for completion in October 2025. Leisure box (formerly cinema box) is completed, the focus is now securing an occupier into the units. Food Hall power cables into area progressing, with completion expected in October 2025.

- Digital skill & Innovation Centre – The lease to be finalised and completed by September 2026.
- George Eliot Visitors Centre - The Planning application went to planning Committee on 11 February 2025 and was granted approval. Sent to Secretary of State and received approval May 2025. Work is now commencing on the tender process.
- Saints – The project was visited at the last meeting. Building - both the ground-floor and first-floor completed. The next step is completion of the lease.
- Parks Revival – Consultant appointed and the project is now progressing to the design development stage and stakeholder engagement.
- E-mobility – Provision of EV charging points, to be included within the Grayson Place development. A few suppliers have been identified, and operating models along with cost implications - currently under review
- Bedworth Physical Activity Hub – Main ground works have been completed along with steel works. Flooring and roof work in progress. The local BBC news team was on site last week, during which they interviewed the portfolio holder, spoke with residents regarding their expectation for the new leisure centre. Increased publicity is anticipated by September.
- Bridge to Living – All units are now vacant, utilities are continuing to be disconnected, conducting structural surveys, ensuring proper health and safety protocols are followed. Reviewing quotes to demolish site via PAGABO framework. Exploring development options.

SPB26

### **Communication Updates**

- a) Website and digital asset - MB informed the board that NBBC has taken control of Grayson Place website. Currently updating communications plan, having regular meetings with communications team, developing a digital brochure that will be ready next week and focusing on getting control of digital assets.
- b) Website Development – MF informed that the communication team has taken back control of the website asset, and are working with the IT team to create a new web page. Currently planning to populate pages with regular content and aimed to keep website updated consistently.
- c) Promotional strategy – LR suggested adding promotional materials to MIRA's Tech App. LR offered to help promote developments through Coventry and Warwickshire champions. EP suggested using events like JG sport event for promotion.
- d) Website and Business Improvement District (BID) – MB mentioned NBBC is addressing current website accessibility issues collaborating with the newly formed Nuneaton BID. The BID has secured funding to

develop a new website that will improve digital accessibility, serve as a central platform for local businesses and development information. MB confirmed that NBBC will work closely with the BID to link communication channels, share development updates, promote local business and town initiatives.

SPB26

**Any Other Business**

- a) Empty Property Issues – SH highlighted significant challenges with property management, which includes many properties are not paying business rates, properties being removed from valuation lists, owners potentially vandalising buildings to avoid rates. MB responded that an Empty Property Officer has been appointed, developing a comprehensive property database, exploring legal powers to address the issue, consulting local MP JG for potential legislative solutions.
- b) Bus Route Proposal – SH raised concerns about Warwickshire County Council's proposed transportation which includes a proposal to route buses down Abbey Street. NBBC opposed to the plan because of potential disruption to the new food hall area, risk of compromising recent urban development efforts, counterintuitive to the street's current pedestrianised status.

SPB27

**Exclusion of the Public and Press**

Under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press were excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items, it being likely that there would be disclosure of exempt information on the description specified in paragraph (iii) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act.

**CONFIDENTIAL ITEM**

SPB28

**Risk register**

NBBC submitted an updated Programme Risk Register. The Board considered the specific risks raised by the updated register.

---

Chair of the Board